

NEWS RELEASE

GREATER NEW ORLEANS FAIR HOUSING ACTION CENTER

GREATER
NEW ORLEANS



FAIR
HOUSING
ACTION CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 1, 2009
www.gnofairhousing.org

CONTACT: Seth Weingart
sweingart@gnofairhousing.org
504.596.2100

FAIR HOUSING CENTER URGES JEFFERSON PARISH HOUSING AUTHORITY TO REOPEN SECTION 8 WAITING LIST

The Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC) denounces the process by which the Jefferson Parish Housing Authority (JPHA) recently opened its Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP, or "Section 8") waiting list. A notice posted on the JPHA website on November 23rd, 2009 invites Jefferson Parish residents to fill out a "pre-application" form online, or request the form by mail between November 23rd and November 30th, 2009. The online form was removed at the close of business on November 30th, and JPHA's notice stated that mailed requests received after November 30th or hand-delivered "will not be processed." GNOFHAC is disappointed that JPHA chose to open its waiting list for the first time in years over the Thanksgiving holiday, a week when Jefferson Parish residents have limited access to social service and advocacy agencies, as well as post offices and public facilities that offer internet access. Furthermore, GNOFHAC is concerned that JPHA advertised the opportunity to apply for its HCVP waiting list exclusively via its website, and the legal notices section of the *Times-Picayune*.

The outreach that the JPHA engaged in to advertise the opening of the waitlist is insufficient in volume, and does not adequately address the needs of people with disabilities. GNOFHAC urges JPHA to reopen the pre-application process with an extended deadline, and to conduct TV and radio advertising to give the public adequate notice that the waiting list is open. Due to the obscurity of its advertising and the lack of access to resources over a national holiday, GNOFHAC recommends that JPHA extend its deadline for at least 30 days. This extension coupled with more comprehensive advertising will give Jefferson Parish residents adequate opportunity to complete the pre-application process, and will give social service agencies adequate time to reach out to their low-income clients.

GNOFHAC Interim Co-Director Kate Scott remarks, "It is unacceptable that JPHA chose to open its Housing Choice Voucher waiting list in a manner that likely bars access for many individuals most in need of housing vouchers. We urge JPHA to amend its process so as to offer equal opportunity to all Jefferson Parish residents."

###

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
Dr. Cynthia Collins

Vice President
Sheila Matute

Board Members
Kecia Branch
Ramona Fernandez
Davida Finger
Lucinda Flowers
Andre M. Perry
Nathan D. Shroyer
Gary Williams

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
James Perry

The Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC) is a private non-profit organization. The Center was established by a group of concerned New Orleanians in 1995 with the help of the National Fair Housing Alliance and a grant from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. GNOFHAC is dedicated to eliminating housing discrimination and furthering equal housing opportunities through education, outreach, advocacy, and enforcement of fair housing laws across the metro New Orleans and Baton Rouge areas. The activities described in this release were privately funded.